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Farm Broadcasters Letter



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U.S. AG EXPORTS UP 26 PERCENT

U.S. agricultural exports for fiscal 1988 rose 26 percent to \$35.2 billion, according to Dep. Sec'y of Agriculture Peter C. Myers. The export volume for 1988 finished at 147.5 million metric tons, up more than 14 percent from the 129.2 million tons exported in fiscal 1987.

WORLD WHEAT PRODUCTION

The world wheat production for 1988/89 is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 502.1 million metric tons, down 3.1 million or less than 1 percent from last month and last year. USSR production is estimated at 88 million tons, down 3 million or 3 percent from last month, but up 6 percent from last year. Australia production, at 13 million tons, is down 6 percent from last month, but up 3 percent from last year. E. Europe production, at 44.4 million tons, is up 12 percent from last year.

COARSE GRAIN PRODUCTION

The world coarse grain production for 1988/89 is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 710 million tons, down 10 percent from last year. U.S. production is estimated at 142.1 million tons, down 34 percent from last year. USSR production, at 98 million tons, is down 14 percent from last year. European Community production at 88.6 million tons, is up 8 percent from last year.

WORLD RICE PRODUCTION

The world rice production for 1988/89 is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 320.5 million tons, up 4 percent from the 1987/88 crop. Foreign production is projected at 315.5 million tons, the second largest crop on record.

WHERE TURKEYS COME FROM

Where do U.S. turkeys come from? According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, about 43 percent of the turkeys produced in 1986 came from three states. The number one producer was North Carolina, followed by Minnesota and California. The south Atlantic region was home to the largest turkey farms, with operations there averaging 40,000 turkeys. The west north central and western regions were close behind. The Midwest initially benefited from abundantly available, inexpensive feeds, but when the price of grain rose in the 1970's, many producers redirected their resources. The South, with less productive land and a good supply of low-cost labor, found turkeys a profitable enterprise.

WORLD OILSEEDS
PRODUCTION

The world production of oilseeds for 1988/89 is forecast by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 200.3 million tons, down less than 1 percent from last month, and down 6.1 million or 3 percent from last year's record output. U.S. production is forecast at 49 million tons, down 19 percent from last year. Of the world oilseeds total, soybeans is forecast at 94 million tons...cottonseed at 32.2 million...peanuts at 21.5 million tons...sunflowerseed, 21.3 million tons...and rapeseed, 21.7 million tons.

DROUGHT
REDUCES FEED

Drought and extended hot weather in many producing areas will result in a 34 percent drop in 1988/89 feed grain production, from 215.2 million metric tons last year to 141.7 million, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. About 10 percent fewer acres were harvested, and average yields were down nearly 27 percent. This year's crop is the smallest since the PIK and drought-reduced crop of 1983. However, the beginning stocks of 133.6 million tons assure a supply sufficient to meet the needs of the market.

INCREASED
FEED COSTS

The tighter supply for all feeds this year will result in significantly increased feed costs, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Prices of feed grains, the major source of energy for livestock and poultry, are expected to average from 25 to 45 percent above last year's weighted by importance of use average of \$76.70 per ton. Soybean meal prices likely will average between \$2.35 and \$2.75 a short ton, compared with \$2.22 in 1987/88. Corn prices likely will average 25 to 45 percent higher than the \$1.94 of 1987/88.

FARM WORKERS
AND WAGE RATES
INCREASE

During the second week in October, 3.19 million persons worked on the Nation's farms and ranches, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This number compares with 3.07 million workers during the comparable week in 1987. The work force was made up of 1.41 million self-employed farm operators, 532,000 unpaid workers, and 976,000 workers hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees doing work on farms and ranches during the survey week numbered 274,000. The all hired farm worker wage rate averaged \$5.18 per hour, up 26 cents from a year earlier. Workers paid on a hourly basis earned \$4.94 per hour compared with \$4.72 last October. Wage rates for field workers were \$4.95, up 15 cents...for livestock workers, \$4.70, up 43 cents from last year.

AUSTRALIA
REDUCING
SUBSIDIES

Australia is reducing its government assistance to farmers. The cutbacks may provide Australia with more leverage as it continues to push for elimination or reduction of subsidies and barriers in world agricultural trade. Economic analysts at the U.S. Department of Agriculture have calculated the producer subsidy equivalents, or PSE's, for a number of countries. During the 1982-86 period, Japan had an average PSE of 72 percent. That's the portion of farmers' gross income that came from government assistance. The European Community was at 35 percent...Canada, 31 percent...the U.S. and New Zealand each averaged 25 percent...and Australia, 11 percent.

HIGH-TECH NOT
ALWAYS THE
ANSWER

The high-tech industry is not the answer for all rural areas, according to an economist of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. High-tech firms do locate research and development activities and other core operations in the country, but usually only when local resources, such as research facilities, match up with high-tech needs. More often rural communities receive the most routine assembly tasks of the high-tech companies which generally pay lower wages. Some planners believe rural areas should attempt to encourage investment in the fast-growing technology industries because these industries are clean and are perceived to pay high wages. These include communications, electronics, defense systems, computers and software.

FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1642... (Weekly 13½ min documentary) On the edition of AGRICULTURE USA George Holmes talks to a number of experts on agriculture as a new career choice for young men and women. The number of students choosing Agricultural Sciences as a career is declining and these experts are trying to turn that decline around.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1630... (Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; ASCS County elections; Export forecast; Protecting nurseries against citrus canker; Money talks for Wisconsin's farm families.

CONSUMER TIME #1122... (Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) New school lunch recipes; Car leasing upswing; Catastrophic health care bill; Raising your child via computer; Why diets don't work.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE... Mon., Nov. 28, Cotton and wool outlook, Livestock slaughter; Nov. 29 thru Dec. 1 the 1989 Agricultural Outlook Conference will be covered daily. Some of the sessions to be covered by USDA Radio will include U.S. and World Agricultural Outlook, Agricultural Trade Outlook; Feed grains; Food grains, Oilseeds, Cotton, Dairy, Fruit and Vegetables, Food prices, Future significance of the 1989 drought, GATT trade issues, Farm policy challenges for the next Administration. So be sure to dial up the USDA Radio Newsline 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

TELEVISION SERVICE programs, A BETTER WAY, DOWN TO EARTH, AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and SATELLITE NEWS are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8 as follows:

Thursdays.... AG UPDATE/SATELLITE NEWS, 7:30-7:45 p.m. ET..... Transponder 12D

Saturdays.... A BETTER WAY, 10:00-10:30 a.m. ET..... Transponder 10D

ORIGINAL DOWN TO EARTH, 10:30-11:00 a.m. ET.... Transponder 10D

UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET..... Transponder 10D

Mondays..... A BETTER WAY, 8:00-8:30 a.m. ET..... Transponder 12D

REPEAT DOWN TO EARTH, 8:30-9:00 a.m. ET.... Transponder 12D

UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 9:00-9:15 a.m. ET..... Transponder 12D

A BETTER WAY is also available on The Learning Channel SATCOM 3R, Transponder 2, Audio 6.8 each Thursday at 10:30 a.m. ET.

OFFMIKE

Daily TV reports on GATT...from Montreal will be sent via Westar IV satellite. The schedule is as follows: December 5 & 6, transponder 7X (channel 14). December 7 transponder 6D (channel 11). December 8 transponder 10 (channel 20). Lynn Wyvill, backed by Debbie Janifer and cameraman Ron Anderson will send items at 1:00 p.m. EST. Brenda Curtis will provide USDA radio coverage and the items will be available daily at 5:00 p.m. EST on the regular Newsline service.

NAFB annual meeting...provided an excellent forum for the USDA radio-TV contingent to meet farm broadcasters. Our Brenda Curtis, Debbie Janifer, and Lynn Wyvill thank members for the welcome. Special thanks to Mike Hansen (WOW Omaha) and his successful "Trade Talk" effort, to George Logan (WIBW-TV Topeka), Dix Harper (WRAL-TV/Tobacco Net, Raleigh) and Mark Vail (Kansas Agricultural Network, Topeka) for their support in assuring USDA had booth space at the Trade Talk program.

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This column...of the newsletter may now be accessed electronically through the AGRIDATA news service, speeding delivery and providing opportunity for farm broadcasters and others to receive newsletter information the same day as it is compiled, each Friday. The newsletter will continue to be sent by mail.

Taking a day off from golfing...to do chores around the house is the nasty prospect facing Jim Johnson (USDA Radio-TV chief, retired). He wrote the other day to also say that the post office is providing good service in getting the newsletter to Salem, OR. History...10 years ago this column, Kelly Lenz is moving up to farm director at WIBW Topeka and Sam Knipp as assistant director. 20 years ago, Evelyn McDonald assistant and wife of husband Mac at WSM Nashville addressed the gathering of American Women in R&TV regarding "The Role of the Farm in Today's Troubled World."

Vic Powell

VIC POWELL, Chief, Radio and Television Division